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PERSPECTIVES OF THE SPIRIT

WILLARD BROWN THORP





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THE SPIRIT  

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FOREWORD

A number of the paragraphs contained in this book were printed in 1904 in a little volume called "A Basket of Fragments", which is now out of print.

The interest awakened has encouraged the author to issue this larger collection, in the hope that it may be of assistance to some who are striving to hold the courage of idealism under the pressure of the problems of modern life.

San Diego, California,
October, Nineteen Ten.

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EXPRESSION

THE suppression of a talent or a faculty is a crime against nature. It is disobedience to the most personal command God has given to each of us. And there are deep laws of life by which such refusals avenge themselves. Many a fall from virtue can be traced to the suppression of a faculty.

THE most normal and necessary act of faith is to believe that what God has given us is worth using, worth developing, worth making the very utmost of.

WHAT will the poets say when they look back upon their poems? They will say: "We love them, for they came out of our very lives. But we are more than they. They are but altars that from time to time we builded for our worship. If you find them suited for your worship, you are welcome to use them. But our spirits have passed on."

IT is by expressing what we are that we become what we may be. Utter your thought, and at once you are carried beyond it. Be true to yourself, and you will have a greater self to be true to.

WHAT is that thought which you call yours, and are half ashamed to speak it because it is yours? Yours it is not any more than some strange new plant that you find in your garden. You did not make it, you could not make it; you simply found it there in your garden. So it is when you dimly feel an idea pushing its leaf up through the soil in that little enclosure of the spiritual world which is under your personal care and observation. That is not yours; that is God's, one of God's hidden things getting itself up to the light through you. It is yours only to tend it and give it a chance to grow, and above all to give it free and brave expression.

THE thought that is in you may be only a fragment of the truth. But it is your fragment, the fragment your life was meant to express. Trust God that in the action and reaction with other fragments from other lives it will do its work in the world. Your thought given free and sincere expression may be a syllable in some great word which the spirit of God is spelling out to this generation.

BE not so conceited as to imagine that you are ahead of your times. The same forces that have made you have also made the times.

NEVER fear that no one will need what you can say, what you can do, what you can be. There will be those who need just that and need it more than anything else.

IT may be that the contribution you are to make to human life is just to ask a certain question, to make men ask it, to press it home to the very life. There are some men who stand in the community asking fundamental questions about the rightness of things. And in their presence others have to ask those questions.

DO you think you can keep it secret, your creed, your view of life? There are no such secrets. Infallibly they make themselves felt through all disguises. As we grow older the mask wears thinner, and the face, the voice, the whole habit of the man, betray, whether he will or not, the quality of his soul.

THE supreme test is old age. That is where a man's sin is sure to find him out. Then, if never before, he becomes a living epistle known and read of all men. He who at seventy or eighty finds himself admired and beloved by those about him, so that people like to be with him and feel that he is a blessing to them, may be perfectly sure that his life has been a success.

THE TASK

IT is not given any man to see his perfected self. The statue on which we are working is veiled from us. Only mighty impulses of the soul bid us "Strike here, and here", with mallet and chisel. Some day the veil will be lifted, and we shall see how all these blows have been shaping the statue.

OUR ideals are prophecies, forecastings of our destiny. They are high necessities that are laid upon us. They are the way God has of letting us know beforehand that which we are destined to be. There is one sense in which one may rightly be a fatalist,—the sense that enables him to say: "This of which I have dreamed, this to which my whole nature points, is what some day I shall be. It is written in the very stars and cannot fail."

IT is necessary to dream; it is necessary to stand long at the wishing-gate; it is necessary to build castles in Spain. There should be time and space allowed for these things. They are indications, pointings of the life in the direction it would take. They are the soul beginning to declare itself.

THE question you cannot get away from is the point of growth in your life. It is your soul reaching out for the truth it needs. Thank God for

it, and believe that in honestly meeting it you are saving your soul. Let no man shame you out of it because it does not happen to be his question. The importance of a question is measured first of all by its relation to the life of the man who is asking it. Let no man, then, despise the question of his own soul, or the question of another man's soul.

A MAN dreamed he was in a library and saw there on the shelves his own biography. With trembling fingers he took it down and ran over the pages till he reached the present moment in his life. But he could go no farther. The next leaf was so fixed that he could not open it.

THERE is a jewel set within the heart of each one of us. It is a crystal after its own peculiar order and with a law of its own. It was there when you were a little child, and it is there today. It may be soiled and marred and buried under rubbish; it may be despised and rejected of men. But it is there, the same always, preserving its crystalline identity. It never grows old. The years of the future will make no difference; and death will make no difference; and all eternity will make no difference. It is the divine, imperishable, peculiar treasure of your individuality.

THE great Shipbuilder has put into your hands a craft designed with the greatest care. It may not be the swiftest or the strongest or the largest;

but it was built for a certain purpose. He has put you as captain on board; and this is the trial trip. This being the case, who are you, that you proceed to find fault with the way your vessel is built and loaded? Let us stop making apologies for ourselves as God has made us. Let us sail our vessel like the captain of a cup-defender, determined to get the very utmost out of her, and proud of our maker and builder, who is God.

WE are continually retreating behind our limitations and saying, Thus far and no farther can I go. God is ever laying His hand upon us and thrusting us out into the open, saying, You can be more than you are; you must be more than you are.

CONSCIENCE is the instinctive protest of the soul against that which threatens the integrity of its life. It is the spiritual organism doing in its sphere the very thing that the physical organism does, namely, spurning the things that menace it and demanding the things that give it life. If we are growing, we are making new conscience all the time because we are making new moral tissue. The soul is advancing its lines into new territory, and is mutely asking for protection.

ONE of the penalties of choosing a low aim in life is that one is in danger of outliving it. His life goes on, but his purpose is left behind;—accomplished or frustrated, it is left behind. Upon his lips

are those saddest of words, "I have had my day". And all because he did not set out with a purpose great enough to employ the whole of his career.

WE thought we had gained the summit. But when the mists cleared away, we discovered that we were only on one of the lower peaks, and there was the great summit towering high above us. We should have to descend a weary way, lose much we thought we had gained, and then climb far up again. The day was spent, and we decided to give over the attempt. So often it is in life. We have arrived at something, and called it the summit because in that direction we could go no higher. But if we had been climbing on the great mountain which God meant us to ascend, we should be climbing still, struggling upward toward something that is above the clouds.

SOME tasks are definite, like the learning of a lesson, the reading of a book. But the great task is endless. It is nothing less than the liberation and fulfilment of a soul. And the reward is the possession of that soul in the measure of liberation and fulfilment which at any moment has been attained. Is it not enough?

THE destiny of each man is determined not by some arbitrary decree of Providence, but by the quality of his own nature. Thereby he draws to himself the kind of experience and the manner of environment that is peculiarly his own.

IT is truer than we realize, that we create our surroundings, that we make our environment, attracting that which belongs to us and repelling that which does not belong to us. There may be some things in our circumstances which are rigid and beyond our power to alter; but the greater part is fluid and responsive to influences that proceed from within our souls. In the long run our surroundings become shaped to us like a close-fitting garment.

INCLUSIVENESS

IN man nature is trying on the garment of personality. The first effect is a sense of isolation. His personality seems a secret, private thing separating him from all else. His instinct is to draw apart and look out with a certain suspicion upon these other beings akin to him yet strangely alien. He goes about armed, not knowing who may betray him. Proud, ashamed, timid, sensitive, the soul moves about, looking for some one whom it may trust.

OUR life is not some little, flickering spark hid away in the center of our bodies; nor does it merely reach to our finger-tips. Our life is as large as the circle of our relationships. We are a part of all we know and all we love. To know a thing is to extend the borders of our life to include it. To love a person is to include him, to take him up into our very life, so that we suffer with his pain and rejoice with his joy, so that whatever happens to him happens to us. In the supreme moments of life we know that this is true.

THE extent of our life is measured by the area over which we are able to feel and to act. Where we can feel and act, there we are. The telephone gives a curious experience of this extension of

personality. A public speaker feels and is felt in every part of his audience; in intense moments his personality pervades the room. So the personality of a great leader pervades the nation. So God pervades the universe.

IT is one of the marks of the divine within us, that we would be inclusive even as God is inclusive. The astronomer, reaching out with his telescope, the naturalist, peering through his microscope, the explorer leaving his bones in arctic wastes, all testify to the power of that inward urge which bids man make his life co-extensive with the life of God.

THE life of the tree is ever in the outer circle, just underneath the bark. All that is within represents the tree's past. It is there, but it is transcended.

HOW small and petty our old prejudices look to us! How cheap our former admirations seem! How plain it is that we broke our alabaster box upon heads that were not worthy of our anointing! And the meaning of the change is that in our growth we are ever drawing larger and larger circles of interest; and as the larger interest becomes our own, the smaller loses its hold upon us.

FRUSTRATIONS

HOW often when the hand of man has made some huge rent in the web of life, or some ugly snarl in its threads, the hand of God gently and patiently takes the havoc that has been wrought, and makes it a point of departure for some new design of beauty, until in a little time even the temporary disturbance looks as if it had been a part of the original plan.

WHY is it that people who have suffered have strange power over us? I cannot share my grief with him who has not grieved. I cannot tell my sin to him who has not sinned. It is not simply for counsel, it is for comprehension, that we go to those who have been through much. And is it not worth while going through things, if by being lifted up you can draw men unto you, touch their hearts, uncover their thoughts?

SOMETIMES we covet a certain hardness of heart. If one had no ear for music, then discords would not annoy. If one had no passions, then one would have no struggles. But such a wish is a refusal of the cup of life; it is a wish in the direction of death. Sensitiveness of feeling, the capacity for keen, intense experience whether of pleasure or of

pain, is the very measure of our life. It is part of the penalty of being alive.

WE strike the minor chord too much. We nurse our doubts and fears. We cry over our lives as over a story that turns out wrong. We allow ourselves to think it is all a dark and awful tragedy. We pity ourselves in our hard lot,—when we are simply having a few of the troubles that are common to all life. Let us learn Paul's lesson, and sing the song of life in a major key.

LET us not repine because our hearts are not always bathed in sunlight and joy. Darkness and light both have their place in the order of nature. The sunset and the sunrise, the most glorious pageants in nature, we owe to this alternation. The day means more because the night has been. And there are some processes of growth which proceed best under the mild light of the stars.

MAY it not be that we shall see at the end that not a chapter in our life's book could be omitted, not even the darkest,—that every turn in the road had to be taken and all the devious way gone through?

IT seemed as if our path led right up to a beautiful flower-bed, and we cried, "Eureka! I have found it". And then a restraining hand was laid

upon us, and we were told it was not for us. And when we rose up from the earth and brushed away our tears, we saw nothing before us but a path. And it led on and on. Some day we shall find what it is leading us to. Even now we find it bringing us to higher levels, wider vistas. Sometimes at a turn of the road we can look far down and see in the distance that flower-bed where we would fain have ended our journey. It looks very small to us now, and we are glad of the Hand that restrained us and thrust us forward on the path, and of the Voice that said, "I have some better thing in store for you".

THE prayer is denied. And being denied, it becomes a stronger prayer. It covers a wider area. It comes to mean more things, far more than we dreamed of at first. The door at which you knocked was at first a little door, and it did not open. You kept on knocking, and it became a larger and larger door. It would take a very large door now to let your spirit in. It was better that the little door did not open.

THE little stream was flowing down to the sea unhindered,—very pretty, very happy, that is all. But one day they hindered its flowing, and more and more they hindered it, until a great dam reached across the canyon, and the stored-up flood of the little stream became a blessing to all the valley below. So when one sees a great life, with stored-up strength and wisdom and sweetness from which

many draw, one may be sure that many little rivulets and perhaps some pretty strong life-currents of desire have been hindered in their course, that there might be this accumulation of power and blessing.

THE higher work of the world is largely done by the power of transmuted affection, just as the wheels of the great power-plants at Niagara are turned by the transmuted beauties and sublimities of the cataract. We would not have it all transmuted. That would strip life of its sweetness. Yet it is true that out of the bereavements of love the world is being redeemed.

FEAR not, O troubled, trembling, despairing soul! Thy very heart, with all its tumult and longing and doubt and fear, is the place where the Spirit of God is working within thee, setting thee free from the fetters that bind, thrusting thee forth into larger life, lifting thee up into higher life.

THE problem of forgiveness is vastly more than whether I shall forgive my brother yonder who has defrauded me. It is whether I shall forgive the world which has defrauded me, its systems and conventions of which I am the victim. Nay more, it is whether I shall forgive the great God of the universe for the calamity, the bereavement, the deformity of mind or body, that has befallen me. Shall I forgive Him? or shall I harden my heart and curse Him?

That was Job's problem, and it is at some time the problem of every man.

A BLOW is struck you. I care not whence it comes,—from your neighbor, from the cold world, or from out the clear sky of that ultimate mystery we call God. It staggers you that men should be so false, so heartless,—that God should be so still. Then you wait. And perhaps, if you are true and steady and able to receive it, somehow out of that very experience comes an enlargement of your soul. You are able to see around it and be reconciled.

HAVE you never observed how, passing through a great and absorbing and costly experience, instead of being crippled for your daily work, you find an inspiration for it? You bring a nobler and greater soul into its every activity. You are lifted above its little frets and worries. Is it not often true that we find the solution of our smaller problems not by fixing our attention upon them, but by challenging some great problem that seems even beyond our strength? The tide that floats the big steamship shall float all the little sailing craft as well.

STORM AND STRESS

THE strong man is he who in the midst of the emergencies and contingencies of life is able to face with composure either outcome, saying within his soul, "Whatever happens, I shall not be dismayed; the essential movement of my life shall not be blocked. I should like this thing, but I can do without it and win."

WE catch at straws when we are in trouble, at schemes and contrivances, at pretences and make-believes. It is not thus that we shall win our victory. We must stand upon our feet and lay hold of great principles.

WHATEVER the storm in which your spirit may be, it is possible for you to rise up within your soul and speak the word that shall bring the inner victory, the inner peace. And when the inner peace has come, the outer tempests soon subside, or beat ineffectually against the bulwarks of the soul.

A PRAYER for the hour of adversity: "O God, help me to come to my true self. Spare me not the blows of disaster that may be needed to bring me to myself. Deliver me not from the consequences of my deeds. Let me encounter them, that I may

know by bitter experience that to which they lead. Only grant that in the hour of trouble I be not wholly cast down, but that its meaning may be so plain that it shall rouse me from my dreams and bring me to myself." That is a brave man's prayer, and he who prays it with all his soul is invincible.

NOW is it that in the midst of the discordant voices of life a man is able to fall back upon the sense of truth and rectitude in his own soul, and find thus a deep peace and security? He is envious about nothing, afraid of nothing. What is it that he is appealing to? What is it on his side that is so strong?

THERE is a certain exultation of spirit in which a man may approach his life burden and claim it, crying, It is mine, no man shall rob me of it; it is mine to carry, and carry it I will, proudly, bravely, unflinching, to the end.

STOP grumbling because you have a burden. It is a part of life; it is not meant that you should be without one. Take what comes to you and bear it. Stop envying your neighbor because his load is not so heavy as yours. You do not know what his load is. The chances are that to him it seems about as heavy as he can bear.

THE burden seems to be an evil, and the man is ever praying to be relieved of it. But the day of relief never comes. If the burden leaves him in

one form, it is only to return in another; they are all different forms of the same burden. And finally he discovers that his characteristic burden is like his shadow, a necessary part of his life.

IT may sound like a paradox, and yet it is true: We have hardly strength to do what we are doing, and yet we have strength to do a great deal more than we are doing. The challenge of a great task, that is what we need.

THE great lawyer makes his motion, and it is denied. He takes exceptions, and they are overruled. He argues his case, and perhaps it goes against him. But what of that? It is all in the day's work. And he proceeds upon his course with all the strength of one who knows full well the vocation for which he was chosen and will not swerve from the full discharge of it.

WHEN once a man has made the discovery that nothing can defeat him, that nothing can prevent him from putting forth the thing that is in his soul,—from speaking his word, doing his kind of work, gathering about him his sort of a world,—then a great peace comes over his soul. After the big world has smashed his little world a few times, and he has picked himself up and gone ahead and re-created it, he is no longer afraid of what may happen. He knows what Jesus meant when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again."

WORK AND PLAY

THE supreme romance for every man is the wooing and winning of his work, and the wedding of his life to the divine idea of which that work is the expression. The great sorrow is to see that work only when it is too late. The great sin is to let it slip through one's hands because one has not courage to let all else go and grasp it.

THE qualities a man puts into his work he puts into his soul.

THE important thing is not the size of one's work, but the quality of it. He who can speak well to fifty people can address five hundred. He who can write so as to charm a little circle can charm the world. To do the thing well, to do it perfectly, that must be our aim. We may let the rest take care of itself.

WHEN the perfect thing has been done, there is no need of calling attention to it, no danger that it will not find recognition. The great souls have given their whole thought to doing the perfect thing, and have left the world to find out that it was perfect. And the world has never failed. Sometimes it

is slow, sometimes it is cruel,—it will crucify. But in the long run it responds. The perfect thing cannot be hid.

THE arrival of the perfect abolishes the imperfect. That which is complete renders forever obsolete what is less than complete.

A MAN should build his life in such a way that the foundation that is laid today shall be adequate to bear the greatest structure which tomorrow may demand. So men built a great church in the middle ages. One generation chose a site and a ground plan, and built a crypt massive and worthy to endure for centuries. And the next generation added a splendid choir. And another, finding the work well done, builded a transept after its own heart. And another made cloisters and chapter houses rich and beautiful. And others labored at nave and towers. And today men pronounce it worthy to be called a cathedral of God, the pride of its city and of the world.

FAITHFULNESS in little things is not enough. It must be coupled with a clear vision for the things that are really great. We must be able to see the thing of supreme importance and give it instantly the right of way.

THE trouble with most of us is not that the things we are doing are so bad, but that there are so much greater and better things we might be doing.

NO one can live a strong, deep life, and be rushing this way and that for every little thing. The strong man is not the one who is always at the beck and call of others. The strong man is he who has respect for himself and keeps the right of way clear for the main work of his life.

I WOULD be willing to help a little, to do my share," say one and another. But until the man comes along who is willing to do very much more than that, the thing is not done. Back of every enterprise of consequence is someone who is putting in his whole energy, never stopping to ask whether he is doing more or less than his share.

THE strong men of history have not been those who have taken forever to make up their minds. They have reached conclusions and have stood forth as advocates, convincing and persuading others. The weak men—and among them have been many of the wise and learned—have been victims of the academic vice, sitting ever in the midst of open questions looking for light.

THE most fascinating quest in the world is the quest of beautiful deeds. When we are converted and become as little children, we shall engage

in it with all the zest of a butterfly-chase, crying, "See, there is one! I choose that for mine". We shall not wait for some one to come and offer it to us. We shall lie in wait and capture one that is all our own. The woman with the alabaster box of ointment was on the quest of beautiful deeds, and she had great success that day. She found one of the rarest in all the world and added it to her collection.

IT is the deeds of pure honesty, pure goodness, pure love, that are built like precious stones into the fabric of our lives. And when all the other things, the mixed mass of flimsy makeshifts, have been burned away like the woodwork of a building, these beautiful deeds will remain our imperishable treasure.

THERE be some who when they come to the end of life will have to confess with shame that they have hardly done their own work at all. They have spent all their time doing other people's work.

IT is good to work; but when work is divorced from joy, divorced from love, divorced from hope, divorced from the creative eagerness of the heart, then it becomes the curse of drudgery, a deadening influence upon the soul. Much of the dissipation into which men plunge is simply a reckless and desperate rebound from the steady grind of drudg-

ery. We shall not get rid of the effect until the cause is removed. In the better day that is coming drudgery, mother of many sins, will be done away.

SOME of the greatest work has been done by people who thought they were simply playing. Our best work is always done when we are so happy in it that we forget it is work at all.

EVEN the birds build their nests and feed their young, singing the while. And the animals dig their burrows in the ground, working as if it were play. And yet it has not been said of them that they were made in the image of God.

COURAGE

THE lives of men have moral power not in proportion as they are faultless, but in proportion as they are brave and generous. The people who have the least moral influence are often those whose behaviour is most irreproachable.

VIRTUE is not mere correctness. Virtue is courage, virtue is conflict, virtue is the bravery of truth and love, virtue is the victory of life over death.

NATURE does not remember. Nature does not compare today with yesterday. Nature lives ever in the present, rejoicing in the continual renewal of her life. Let us learn her secret. To rise from one's bed in the morning and go forth to the day with all the freshness of a new creation,—the wrack and uncleanness of yesterday gone, and the fresh tide of today filling every inlet of one's soul,—that is the way of power.

MAN'S morning devotions should be his spiritual gymnastics. Choose for your morning thought something that will give tone and vigor, poise and power, resistance and resilience for the day's work.

GO awake in the morning saying, "I go forth today to meet Him, to meet my Beloved; perchance I shall see Him!"—that is hope. And even if that day we do not see Him, even if everything goes wrong and all paths lead nowhither, and at night the head presses weary and discouraged upon the pillow,—still is it well to have hoped. And we awake refreshed and go forth to hope again. Some days the hope comes true.

MUCH of our praying is worse than useless, because it is desperate. The prayer that avails is the brave, joyous, serenely confident prayer.

IT is well for us to put it down as a settled conviction, that when we are utterly hopeless we are simply sick. It is a wise man who knows enough to recognize this at the time, and so to discount his misery. Lie down, child; sleep and rest; and when sweet hope revives, you will know that you are getting better.

DESPAIR is the parent of many sins. The hour of despondency is the hour of temptation. Then it is that one says: "It matters little what I do; my life is of no account anyway. While I thought I could accomplish something, I was careful and felt that I could not afford to do this and that; but now that I see I can't win, it doesn't matter much." If we would conquer sin, we must find some medicine

for these moods of despondency. We must rescue one another from despair, if we would rescue one another from sin.

HMAN is not in a position to do much with good advice so long as his heart is heavy and sad. He needs first a tonic of joy. Tell him some good news.

THE man who has simply heard Jesus say, "Come unto me and I will give you rest,"—has he heard the strongest note in the Master's call?

COME out of your introspection, brooding over your needs and troubles, going off in a corner and telling over your beads of faith. Come! right some of these wrongs, teach some of these ignorant, fight some of these battles for human liberty. Any one could get morbid and unhappy and shed great tears, if he sat down and nursed his soul. Up! work for others, work for the world.

OVERCOMING EVIL

THE sin you are sorrowing over is not likely to be the worst thing about you. The worst thing about you is probably something on which you pride yourself.

YOUR problems are not peculiar; they are representative. And the very one you think most peculiar is likely to be the most representative.

SO long as a man will not admit that he is in the wrong, his neighbors are apt to be severe in their comments; but as soon as he humbles himself, they not only forgive him but begin to take his part.

NOTHING will bring a man to his senses like being made to face without the slightest abatement the consequences of what he has been doing. The vision of the mountain-top is not more salutary than the vision in the valley of humiliation.

THE mind is quick to learn, and the hand is quick to imitate; but character is a slower growth, it cannot be hastened. Thought leaps like a flash of lightning to the earth's remotest bound; but char-

acter is like adding cell to cell in the woody fiber of the tree-trunk.

THE human soul is a very delicate organism. Friction or stoppage at a single point means disorder throughout the whole. The life energy that should go to that point goes elsewhere, and some other element becomes abnormal and excessive. Often the remedy for a sin lies in opening up some entirely different side of the nature where the surplus of vital energy may find an outlet. Every sin of commission has behind it some sin of omission.

WORK is the great redemptive agency. Not task-work, not slave's work, but active goodness. The fool hath said in his heart, "I will work until I can afford to be idle". But when the time comes, if he keeps his resolution he degenerates.

DO not let your house stand vacant. Lease it at once to some good tenant. Then when the evil spirit returns he will not even try to get in. He will find the house leased to another and occupied by him,—his name on the door, his shades in the windows, his furniture and rugs in the rooms, his children playing in the yard, the stamp of his possession and individuality everywhere, and not even a little card in a window saying that there is a room for rent. That is the way to keep the evil spirits out.

SAVING a human soul is like saving a furnace fire. We first clear out the ashes, the old dead stuff, the accumulations of the past. Then we shake it a little, but not too vigorously, else we shall lose the little fire we have. Then we put in some kindling. We give it something easy to do at first, something it naturally lays hold of and is glad to get. Little deeds of kindness make good kindling, yielding quick returns, even if they do not last long. Then we can shovel on the hard coal, the long-range duties, the heavy responsibilities. But one other thing we must not forget, and that is to put on the draft, a good big draft,—no harm to leave the doors wide open at the bottom for a while, and let the flames go sweeping up into the flues of the chimney. Sometimes the draft itself will save the fire, as when a mighty breath of God's spirit comes upon the dry bones of a man's life.

EVIL is simply the shadow cast by the advancing standard of good. They who talk of abolishing evil, as if it were some dragon whose head could be cut off by the valiant saint, do not realize the import of their words. So long as we are advancing, we shall always be leaving something behind, and that which we leave behind we shall see to be inferior and evil. It is not until we are beginning to leave it behind that we call it that. From the standpoint of today much of what we thought yesterday must always seem to be error, and much of what we did yesterday must always seem to be sin.

HUMAN progress has consisted in the uncovering one by one of the divine laws for the life of man. The first effect in each instance is a profound sense of sin. We discover that we have been living in violation of some of the great laws of life.

THE lower things in life seem to be a great deal stronger than the higher things, because they are so ancient and well established. The battle for righteousness is almost always an attack on things that are established and customary.

THE facts are mostly on the side of things as they are; for facts are all in the past tense,—facta, things that have been done. The future is not a fact. It comes by faith.

THERE is a liberty that leads to liberty, and there is a liberty that leads to bondage. If a certain course will leave me less free tomorrow, will fetter the life of my spirit until there shall be less and less room and margin in it,—what kind of freedom is that! Give me the liberty that leads to liberty, and not the liberty that leads to bondage.

WE must learn to stop injustice in the way that Jesus stopped it, the only way in which it can really be stopped. When wrong was done him, it went no farther; it stopped there. He refused to be

a connecting link in the passing on of wrong. What entered into him as evil was vented upon no one else through him as evil. It simply ceased; and from him instead went forth kindness and justice.

WHEN the drill strikes a deposit of oil or gas, there is a sudden uprush. The question is what to do with all this escaping energy. It is inflammable,—shall we touch a match to it and let it flare? In its crude state it is foul,—shall we let it flow out and pollute the air and the soil and the streams? Or is there some way to refine it and purify it, and turn it into such channels that it shall give light and warmth to thousands of homes? Of you the parable is spoken,—your energy, your passion, your enthusiasm.

THE LATENT GOOD

IT is common to say that the roots of evil are very deep within us. But it also needs to be remembered that the roots of goodness lie very deep. "How hard it is," says George Eliot, "to kill the deep-down fibrous roots of human love and goodness!"

THE worst man in the world manages to keep up heart by virtue of some relics of goodness that are in him; even as the man whose limbs are paralyzed and who can hardly speak, sustains life by virtue of organs that are still intact.

THERE are places in every man's life where eternal goodness looks out from beneath the evil and asks to be given a chance. And these are the places at which we must lay hold of the man if we would help him.

SOMEWHERE in every man's life is the Christ,—obscured, denied, betrayed, crucified, alas how often!—but always there. No child is born into the world without that divine spirit as part of its life equipment. One may depend upon it as surely as upon the presence of the heart and lungs and other

vital organs. The spiritual organism, too, has its vital parts, its normal elements. We do not have to get them afterwards like clothes and put them on.

WE are apt to speak of heredity as if by its means all the evils of the past were rolled in upon us. If that were so, our lives would be utterly poisoned so that no wholesome growth would be possible. But even as a river flowing between towns and defiled again and again by sewage needs only to flow a few miles in the sunlight to become fresh and sweet again, so the stream of life flowing between the generations seems in some mysterious way to come out under the touch of a divine sunlight, and emerges in that symbol of freshness and purity, a little babe.

WHAT becomes of a fact, an observation, an experience, when it enters into our mind? Instantly it calls up certain associations. In other words, certain previous inhabitants of our mind reach out for it, and say, "Here, you belong with us". And so it goes along with them and adds itself to them. If the evil things within us have got the advantage, so that whatever comes in they reach out for and seize, crying, "Here is food for us; here is something for us to be selfish or jealous or suspicious or complaining about,"—then indeed we have a problem on our hands. If all the runners are from one hotel, very few of the arriving passengers will go to any of the other houses. So the nobler parts of our nature must have their runners at the arrival of every train, seiz-

ing hold of things by their brighter and better side and claiming them for the good. That is how out of the same mass of experience one man will increase the bitterness and another the sweetness of his nature; one will find food for the baser and another for the nobler things within him.

IF to be good is to be unnatural, and if to be natural is sin, then the only way to give goodness a chance would be to withdraw from the world into a kind of conservatory of virtue. That was the way of the monks, and their ruined monasteries are monuments to the doctrine of original sin. But the goodness which the Master came to teach is no such hot-house growth. It is a goodness for which the body of man was framed as the temple, and the mind of man as the instrument, and the natural affections of man as the expression. It is not renunciation but fulfilment. It is as natural and as satisfying to the soul as health is to the body.

THE problem of life for each of us is to take the daily grist of experience and transform it into character and personality.

SELECT the most radiant and altogether wonderful person of your acquaintance, and consider the daily miracle which is enacted in that life. Into it is entering a certain daily experience not particularly different from that of many others. And yet

what a rare and wondrous product emerges! Here is this flower of a radiant life blooming every day with a beauty and charm and fragrance all its own. It is like a plant reaching down into the dark, ill-smelling earth, lifting it up, mingling it with the air and sunshine and transforming it into a beautiful blossom.

STRENGTH of Materials'' is one of the branches of engineering, and a similar study must be made in human life. Instead of assuming that men are inherently bad, we shall do well to inquire what provocations they have been under, and whether the situation has not been such as to subject them to a strain which human nature was not calculated to bear.

IT is amazing what new strength and beauty a life will sometimes take on, when it is removed from the place where it does not belong and put where it does belong. Many a person has had the name of being bad, and has done things to deserve that name, for no other reason than that he is not in his place. He is at his worst, and he puts others at their worst.

OFTEN the good overcomes the evil just by presenting itself. The comparison cannot be borne.

LENDING A HAND

YOU are fighting a battle for your character, for your faith. Tell me, what kind of a victory are you winning? Shall you barely be able to pull yourself through, or will you have strength to lend a helping hand to somebody else? Ah, you and I will win better victories if we are fighting for nobler causes than simply our own preservation.

THE smallest man in the world is the man who has the smallest sense of responsibility. "Am I my brother's keeper?" No, Cain, you are not; but if you were a bigger man, you would be.

I HAVE sometimes watched a fly struggling to free itself from the sticky coating of the fly-paper, till it gets wing after wing and leg after leg free; but I have never seen it turn back to help another fly. Are we no better than the flies?

WHEN once a man has turned the tide in his own life against some evil thing, he is able to help others. Wherever a victory is won, it makes possible other victories in other lives.

PHILOSOPHERS have sometimes deplored the fact that we ever attained to self-consciousness, and have advocated a return to unconsciousness, to the oblivion of self, as the only remedy for unhappiness. It is true that self-consciousness, that is, a self-centered consciousness, is the cause of much of our unhappiness. But the way of escape is not by retreat into unconsciousness, but by advance into unselfishness. That is the way of Christ.

ABUNDANT life and unselfish life are synonyms. The life that seeks to segregate itself from the common contacts of human service is not abundant; it is meager and impoverished.

NOTHING so ennobles a man, so lifts him above what is small and base in his own life, as really to give himself for the life of another.

THE greatest souls are always accessible to the humblest.

WE must be on our guard against thinking people are worse than we simply because they are different.

YOU cannot save men unless you love them. And you cannot love them unless you believe in them.

GREAT a man as a leper and he becomes a leper. People that are cut off from work and fellowship and trust and hope and love inevitably degenerate.

IS it possible for growth to take place in an atmosphere of suspicion, every eye averted, and the worst construction put upon every word and act? Are we wise in separating a man for years from everyone who loves him or has faith and joy in him, and then expecting him to emerge from the prison walls a reformed man?

THERE is only one kind of missionary work that really counts, and that is personal goodness coupled with infinite tenderness.

IF there is any man who wants to talk to me about my soul, that is the man I do not want to see. The men who have helped me most have not been men who talked to me about my soul. They have been men who were true and good, and believed something, and lived as if they believed it.

NO man can teach us unless the same spirit be working in us and in him. No man can teach us except what we are ourselves on the verge of discovering.

IT is easy to stand for ideals when one is at a distance from the facts. The test is to stand for ideals when one is face to face with the facts. Our problem is to idealize the man with whom we have daily dealings, to invest his need with the sacredness of all human need, his sorrow with the majesty of all human sorrow, to look beneath the shabbiness and meanness of his exterior semblance and become aware of the soul within.

STUDY to name people by their virtues and not by their faults. When that poor girl came in to anoint the Master's feet, the pharisee named her by her sin, while Jesus named her by her love for him. That made all the difference.

THERE is a secret name belonging to every man, a name that is written in heaven. When someone calls him by that name, he starts. "How did you know it?" he asks. "It is the dream of my life to be that thing. But you are mistaken; I am very far from that." And then the lover of that man's soul, the one who has divined it and recognized it, will say, "Yes, you can be that; you shall be that; you are that already in my thought of you." Can one render a more beautiful service than thus to go about calling people by their Christian names?

FRIENDSHIP

YOU cannot do things for people without forming ties between you and them. And the more vital the things you do, the stronger the ties.

THE life of each of us is more than an individual life. It quickly interlaces itself with the lives of others. The idea that we are most truly ourselves when we are alone is an illusion. We are most truly ourselves when we are with those whom we love.

COUNT no man happy simply because his individual lot seems prosperous and free from care. Count no man happy until you know those whom he loves and what their troubles are; for they are his own.

LIFE consists of relationships, and our most vital relationships are with the persons whom we love. They are our world; in them we live; apart from them we cease to live. What was life to Dreyfus on Devil's Island with a letter only once in three months from the one who was his world? What would have remained of life if those letters, too, had been cut off? And what mattered it that in space he and she were thousands of miles apart? When those letters

came, were they not together? was there not "a garden where they met"? Life consists of relationships, and most of all with the persons who constitute our world.

LOVE is the eye of the soul, by which it discerns another soul. Love discerns the divine in its object, and only to love is it revealed. The vision of God, of the divine in the human, is for those whose hearts have been purified by love.

THE necessity is upon every person of having someone to love him. Many a man can date the very birth of his soul from the day when someone began to love him, when the warmth of appreciation and affection was let in upon his nature.

WE are saved by faith,—yet not so much by our faith in God as by God's faith in us. The mightiest power that can come into a man's life is the belief of another in him, of one who stands above him and to whom he looks up.

THE deeper we go into life the rarer friendship becomes, the more our souls do famish for it, and the more it means to us when we find it. The reason is that as we go on in life, especially the high life of the spirit, our natures become more and more individual. It is like a mountain-range: on the lower

levels it is all one, but above the peaks separate, and each in a solitude all its own pierces the blue. The finer and more individual souls have ever felt this loneliness. It is oppressive until one awakes some day and discovers that it is the presence of God.

THE ordinary friendships of life are compromises. We are not quite ourselves in them. We have to dress for them, to make some little adjustment of our mental costume before we open the door for this one or that one to enter. We have to explain ourselves in them for fear we may be misunderstood. And there is often a lingering feeling that if these friends knew us altogether they might find something in us to displease and so withdraw from us. We are glad even of such partial friendships for the refreshment they give. And yet all the time they speak of a greater friendship that might be. They are not the light, but are come to bear witness of the light.

YOU have touched your friend's canvas, his picture of life,—touched it with your brush, deepened this color or that, the light or the shade. And he has done the same to yours. We are doing it all the time for one another.

WE know people only in their relationship to us. You think you know your friend, can read him like a book; but tomorrow someone may come along

and draw things forth from him of which you have never dreamed. We are many-sided figures, and we know each other only as two corresponding sides come together.

THE only real conversation is between two alone. Mary gets more of the one thing needful because Martha is out in the kitchen preparing the meal.

THE trouble with many of us is that somehow we are shutting our hearts, covering them close and clutching them tight in a proud, anxious, sensitive, unnatural reserve. We are afraid of each other. We do not quite dare to be our real selves. We wear a mask, and the soul shut in its secret chamber cannot grow. The secret of life, of growth, of freedom, is the open heart.

ONE of the problems in life for each of us is to find the people to whose hearts God has given us the key, and who may in turn have the key to our heart. Ah, but what if the key has become broken or rusted or twisted out of shape? Then it will not open the heart for which it was intended.

A MAN must punctually obey the laws of his own genius, or he will never make the friendships that were intended to complete his life. The human soul is a very finely wrought organism, and one may

not tamper with its workings without paying the penalty. The vague unhappiness that is in so many lives is doubtless the spiritual equivalent of some of these finer laws that we have broken, some of these connections we were meant to make and have missed.

ONE of the mysteries of spiritual dynamics is the way in which two people, both weak, both frail, both stumbling, may yet by appealing to the best in each other obtain such mutual support that out of weakness shall come strength, out of doubt faith, out of faltering courage.

THERE is a mutual idealization between friends which works for the uplifting of each character. When I look into the face of my friend, I am confronted by his thought of me. It is better than I am, but still it is I and not another. It is an illusion, and yet it is a truth, a prophecy. It beckons me toward my higher self.

THINK you it is hard to give? Ah no, it is joy, it is life to give, when you have found the one to whom you can give your best.

SOME people are so responsive to others that they do not visit a friend without wearing home some little fragment of his personality, like a flower in the button-hole.

IT is no mere luxury, it is a necessity for a man's best work, that he should have a Bethany to which to retreat at eventide when the toil of the day is over,—a place where as he enters he can shake off from his feet the dust of the world's arena, the anxieties, the disappointments, the harsh criticisms,—where he can lay aside the conventional affectations behind which even the sincerest of men instinctively shield themselves from the cold stare of the world,—a place where he can rest and be himself with full certainty that he will be understood and appreciated, that love will overlook his faults and not chide him for them,—a place where the atmosphere will put him at his best and lure his soul out of its hiding-place. It is this which every man who has it knows to be the finest thing in his life. In the strength of it he goes his day's journey, and into the joy of it he returns weary at night. There they call him by some familiar name, and let him do as he pleases, and know how to let him alone and how and when to companion him. It matters not how small may be the cottage or how shabby the furnishings, it is the most sacred thing in all his life, his home, his Bethany.

SINCERITY

IT takes the highest form of courage to be simple, natural, sincere, unaffected. Much of what we teach children under the name of behaviour is the art of pretence, of dissembling their thoughts and feelings. That life of artificiality and dissimulation which the world enjoins as a social necessity is steadily disqualifying us to live and breathe in a world where transparent truth is the law.

THE beginnings of insincerity are traceable to fear. Most of the lies we have told have been when we were frightened. Sometimes people are scared into telling the truth, but more often they are scared into lying. And on the other hand, the cultivation of courage is the cultivation of honesty.

THE humblest person can be a power if he will but live and speak the truth. He may suffer for it, but he will be a power.

TRUTH does not flourish in darkness, behind closed doors. The methods of occultism and obscurantism are never the methods by which truth is served. Open inquiry, free investigation, frank statement, due regard for all the facts in the case,—these compose the atmosphere in which truth thrives,

and whatever shrinks from that atmosphere may be known beforehand to be imposture.

THE scientific spirit consists in a sincere respect for facts, and a determination to consider all the facts involved before drawing a conclusion.

WITH many men, when they swear allegiance to the truth, it is really to their opinions as to what truth is that they dedicate themselves. The really great man is he who is ready to listen carefully and thoughtfully to the argument of the man on the other side, searching if there be not some truth in it which he ought to recognize.

THERE is no more flagrant disloyalty to Christ than that type of dishonest scholarship which seeks to protect a creed by throwing up a cloud of dust to obscure the bearing of facts. Wherever that is being done today by preachers and leaders in the church in their attitude toward questions of science and history, the church loses the respect of men who love truth. And without them she can do nothing.

WHATEVER faith in God we have must be an open-eyed faith, a faith that can look the whole situation in the face, and drag the darkest fact from its hiding-place and hold it up to the light. There is no commandment, Thou shalt keep thine eyes shut,

or thy mind shut. The things that are in this world are here for us to look at and to reflect upon. The faith that we have we must have in the light of all the thinking and all the knowledge of our age.

THERE is not one of us whose life is not cast in the midst of some of the great battles of human progress. We are moving about among the combatants and have power to dishearten them or to cheer them on. Now and then we have a chance to strike a blow ourselves.

WHEN you go down in battle having stood by your colors, and been scrupulously loyal to what is true and fair and kind, there are many consolations in that defeat. That is what it is to have fought a good fight. But when you have resorted to every spiteful word and underhanded trick, excusing it by the goodness of the cause or the unscrupulousness of the adversary,—then the hour of defeat has few consolations.

THE great heroic acts of history have not been done by consultation. Would Jesus have gone to the cross, if he had taken counsel with his friends? The man fresh from his vision gathers only doubts and cautions from those who have had no vision. "I conferred not with flesh and blood," says Paul.

THE altar of liberty is one on which we can sacrifice with joy. But the sacrifices we make on the altars of pride and appearance bring no real joy. Perhaps the reason there are so many sad faces among us is that we are making sacrifices on the wrong altar.

WHAT a free, simple, open life the Master lived! He waited until he was thirty, and was subject unto them at Nazareth. Then when he saw that the petty ideas of his family threatened to keep him in the ruts of tradition, he quietly walked out through the door and sought his own. He pointed to that group of friends, and said that they to him were mother and brethren. He hired himself to no man to do his bidding. He studied solely to please the God who was mirrored in his own soul. So he lived his life and did his work with the absolute liberty which is the birthright of every child of God. And by so doing he has helped to set us all free.

FAITH

THE fundamental hungers of our nature are not without that which shall feed them. Argue boldly from the need of your soul to the existence of that which shall answer to that need.

ALIVING faith can come only from the experience within one's own life of that harmony which one seeks to find in the universe.

YOU cannot explain the grounds of your faith without laying bare the secret history of your heart. It has sprung from certain interactions of feeling between your soul and the great universe of life.

IT is of the very nature of faith that it is the rare and precious distillation of human struggle and sorrow. It is the dew of the morning, that out of the blackness and chill of the night has been distilled upon the grass.

FAITH does not come as a luxury but as a necessity. When you find yourself in the place where you cannot go forward without it, then it will come.

THAT was an appalling day, was it not, when it came over us that we did not lead a charmed life, that things were likely to happen to us just as to anyone else, that no exceptions would be made in our favor, that we should have to take our place in the line along with the rest. It was a beautiful faith, the self-centered faith of our spiritual childhood; but the day we came of age was the day when that childhood faith died within us. From its ashes something vastly larger and better has arisen. But it took a long time for it to rise. The three days sometimes seemed very long.

SOME say: Forget the underlying problems; fasten your eyes on the work to be done, and go grimly ahead.

“With thy hands go and do thy duty,
And thy work shall clear thine eyes.”

There is truth in that. But a man cannot even adequately know what his duty is, when the skeleton of doubt and misery and despair is in his closet and he has simply shut the door and turned the key and said, We'll go about our business just the same. It takes a man's whole soul to see his duty. It takes a man's whole soul to see the vision of his work, and to see the vision of truth that for him shall be inspiring.

THE solution of the problem of faith, and of the related problems of joy and courage and efficiency, is to be found in deep, vivid, all-sided life, in

which action and reflection and sympathy are blended into one harmonious whole.

THE method of science is to believe only that for which the proof is complete. The method of religion is to put one's trust in the deepest intuitions of the soul.

THE electric wiring of our house is in a precarious condition and every now and then a fuse burns out and we are left in darkness. The light-energy from the central plant is pressing itself in at our doors, but there is some defect in our receiving apparatus. Is it not so with many lives? The discoveries and questionings of science and criticism have been too much for them. They have not been able to receive the current so as to make it illuminate and inspire their lives. The fuse burns out, and they are left in darkness or fall back upon artificial substitutes. But let us not think the light of the universe has gone out, simply because we have not been able to set our own house in order so as to receive it.

THAT science is agnostic simply means that science has no instruments for dealing with fundamental religious questions. The scientist himself returns from his investigation of those questions feeling that it is entirely possible that there may be some great and vital truth which has wholly escaped

his measurements, and which even today is hid from the wise and learned and revealed unto babes.

NATURE is merciless. The law by which the rock bruises the hand that strikes it is never broken. It is not until we come to man that we find the miracle of mercy, by which the blow that is struck may be dissolved in tenderness, and the hand that comes back to us be open and not shut. But is it only in man that we find mercy? When we go out into the desert, out with Job upon the ramparts of the world, have we left mercy behind? Must we go back to where the light glows in some farm-house window, to find kindness? The stars are shining. Perhaps yonder are hearts like ours, and in those hearts is mercy. But is this all,—these little finite points of mercy? Is it only thus in all the universe that this rare quality is distilled?

THERE is a fellowship between us and Nature. Our hearts leap and thrill with the swelling buds, the rising sap, the greening grass. But her response to us at best is impersonal. She is a cold mistress. She goes on without us. She leaves our hearts still hungry for something as great and beautiful and full of life as she, but far more personal and tender.

THE dark earth lifts itself and blossoms into a rose. The slime of life is purified until it yields the rarest human love. Does all this come of itself?

or does it come out of the very heart of One whose thoughts are high above ours as the heavens are high above the earth?

I NEED no miracle, no special revelation, to assure me of divine things, so long as I can look into a human soul, as into a lily's cup, and see there something so precious and rare and spiritual that it compels me to adopt a view of the universe which shall account for that exquisite product.

TIME was when what is now the eye was only a bunch of nerves peculiarly sensitive to the light. It could see nothing, as we now count seeing. It could not prove that it was ever going to see anything. No one knows how long it took for that bunch of nerves to become the eye, with all its delicate adjustments,—opening to admit to the soul the picture of the world, and to be the window through which glimpses of the soul itself may sometimes be caught. Where the eye was then, there the organ of spiritual vision is today. That which it yields as yet, even in the most highly developed persons, is so dim and elusive that it can sustain itself by no argument but only by the intuitions and presentiments of faith. Let us give it time.

THE higher life of the soul does not require very much in the way of external evidence to build itself upon. There is so great an eagerness within,

so intense a feeling of the necessity of something to match the higher affinities of our being, that give us only a gleam of light, a whisper across the silence, and we will stake everything upon it. Challenge it, demand how we know, and we can make no answer. Yet so powerful are these ideal feelings within us, that so long as their basis is not utterly taken away, they will go on impelling and directing our lives.

THE dawn makes itself felt in a thousand ways before the orb of day discloses itself; and the great truths of the spiritual life are felt long before they can be proven.

THERE they are, the sublime conceptions of faith, like the snow-capped summits of a mountain-range, sunlit and glorious, looking as if suspended in the sky. We can see those radiant summits, though almost doubting if they be not a mirage; and we can see the solid ground beneath our feet, and that it is sloping upward; but all between is shrouded in mist and gloom. And it is often only by a supreme act of resolution that we can bring ourselves to believe that within the mist and gloom is solid ground all the way up, and solid rock upon those shining summits painted on the sky. Yet when with weary feet we have climbed, we shall find it even so.

WE are simply getting glimpses of things as we journey along. Any one of them is certain to be partial and fragmentary, and very likely to be

misleading. The utmost we can expect of even our largest thought is that it will somehow symbolize and represent to us the truth of God. This being so, we may properly resolve to seek and cherish such views of things as are inspiring, believing that these least unworthily represent what the effect of total truth would be upon a mind great enough to receive it.

G O D

THAT which one age speaks of in terms of personality another age may speak of in terms of force, of principle, of ideal. But the reality in both instances is the same.

GOD is more than Sovereign and Judge, more than Taskmaster, more than Fate, more even than Father. He is supremely the Teacher, seeking above all to bring out in each one of us the pattern of beauty that was specially made for him.

GOD is ever the Person of the largest circle of life and interest. And what is revelation but God disturbing us and compelling us to go outside our little circle and live in a larger one? After it has been done we thank Him for it; but while it is in process we rebel.

THE same God who is the author of the highest states of the soul is also the author of the material world. The chemist, the electrician, the biologist, no less truly than the prophet, the psalmist, the spiritual teacher, are working with materials that have been ordered and given by God.

LET no man speak lightly or contemptuously of the material basis of our life. Let us not despise this rude stem that comes up out of the earth, for upon it shall be borne the blossom of beauty and the fair fruit of immortality.

NO longer do we think of God as being deeply offended with the human race. We are all in the kindergarten stage with our follies and foibles; and the great Teacher does not take us too seriously when we double up our puny fists and blaspheme against Him, or when we break forth in anger at our fellows.

WHAT do we mean by the will of God? It is a great upward-moving tide, flowing through the ages, flowing through the hearts of men. Far back in the past we can see the traces of its working,—the old ripple-marks on the shore, where the waves were pushing a little higher, a little higher. The tide has risen far since then; the old ripple-marks are quite submerged. And it is rising still.

THE world is not yet even an organism. It is in process of being organized. It is chaos on the way toward order. All that we can say is that organizing centers are appearing here and there, oases in the desert. The first chapter of Genesis might be rewritten today in the present tense. The Spirit of God is brooding over the face of the great deep. God

has said, Let there be light; and the light is coming. God has said, Let there be order; and order is coming. God has said, Let there be man in our image, after our likeness; and man is coming into His image and into His likeness. All this is taking place today. We are in the midst of the creation.

THE rougher masonry and carpentry of the world has been accomplished, and now the divine Artist is engaged upon His finest and most delicate creations. He is molding the life-stuff into a thousand shapes of personality. He may not let this work out to artisans. He must do it with His own fingers, and breathe upon it with the breath of His spirit. He must hold it in the furnace, and plunge it into the flood, and expose it to the blast, and hold it up in the sunlight.

THE man who without faith in God is devoting his life to bring to pass a heaven upon earth, is himself one of the best evidences of that very God whom he doubts.

HERE stands some little atheistic man in the presence of the San Francisco earthquake, and says: "There is no pity in God. See His rocks, how merciless they are! They crush a man as quickly as an ant. There is no pity in God; but there is pity in my heart and in the heart of others like me." O little atheistic man, who are you and what is your

heart, but a part of the great universe of God? What right have you to take the love that is in the heart of man and subtract it from the universe, and judge God by what is left? How foolish to say there is no goodness or justice in God, because the movements of the rocks do not show intelligence enough to avoid shaking great cities. Upon each plane of existence we find the manifestations of God which are appropriate to that plane. There is a sense in which God is in the earthquake. It is a part of one of His great processes on the material plane of existence. There are higher aspects of God which we find in the world of living things. There are higher aspects still which we find in the soul of man. In the movements of the rocks we find gravitation and heat, but we shall not find intelligence and justice there, any more than we find spirituality in plants and creeping things. These qualities are to be found only on those higher levels where the tree of life has blossomed in the souls of men and borne its perfect fruit in the gentle ministrations of love.

FROM Colorado Springs, ten miles away, Pike's Peak is a glorious vision of a mountain. But when we get to Manitou, at its very base, we cannot see it at all. We say, "Where is it? We have lost it." But no, we are nearer than ever before, folded between the knees of the giant. Is it not often so with the soul's approach to God? In the ages of faith men saw God from afar, glorious and beautiful, outlined against the sky. Prayer and sacrifice and thanksgiving and praise were natural expres-

sions of the soul in the presence of that vision. And if those things do not seem so natural and spontaneous today, if clouds and darkness are round about the face of the Most High, may it not mean that we are at Manitou clasped in the great rock ridges of righteousness and judgment which are the eternal foundations of His throne? Some day the clouds will clear away from views of God that are now obscured; and then we shall find that we are nearer the summit of the mountain because we left the distant point from which the splendid view was gained, because we went in among the foot-hills and lost the beautiful vision and climbed footsore and weary upon the great foundations.

OUR personality is not a closed circuit. It dips deep into God. It is rooted in Him, as the tree is rooted in the soil. That which comes up from within is none the less from Him than that which comes down from above.

I SAW one radiating goodness and sunshine and the grace of authority, and I said, How do you do it? The answer was, "It is not I; it is the God within. My part is simply to keep the glass clear. But too often it gets covered with the frosts of unkindness or the grime of earth or the mists of fear. And then the light does not shine through."

HAVE you not sometimes felt at the close of a busy day that your intense surface activity prevented the deeper relations of the soul from asserting themselves? Call it God, call it what you will, something there is which when we open our hearts in silence, in meditation, in prayer, comes into us and enriches the soul. I raise in all seriousness the question whether in our lives of busy usefulness, rushing hither and thither, we may not unwittingly be closing our souls to those deeper influences which are really the sources of the spiritual life.

SHALL we liken the human soul to a pool in the woods, left by the rain, reflecting the trees and the sky, but already drying up around the edges and soon to disappear? Or shall we liken it to the crystalline pool of a Yellowstone geyser, opening into something deeper which no man has ever explored, fed from beneath, moved and controlled from beneath, connecting with some great reservoir close by the beating heart of the world? What are our idealisms, our intuitions, our inspirations, our spiritual awakenings, but the effects produced upon the surface by events in the deeper unconscious portion of our being? What are kindred souls but they who open into the same reservoir of life? Separate on the surface, they are united in the depths.

THERE is a stream in the Yellowstone Park, which flows through the plain where the geysers are. It has its rise like other streams from the sur-

face springs in the woods. But that is not the whole story of its life. As it flows through the geyser plain, it receives into itself the water from those mighty geysers pouring out of the very heart of the earth. And by virtue of these subterranean waters it becomes profoundly changed. Is not that stream a parable of our human lives, flowing no doubt a continuous current out of the forests and jungles of the past—yet who can say that the bed of the stream itself is not full of openings that go deep into the heart of God?

RELIGION

THE deepest thing within any man is his religion. It is his secret. He will not reveal it to one who does not understand. He will be silent, at the risk of being thought to have no religion at all. And yet there is no point in his whole being where he so longs for companionship.

DO not insist upon understanding your neighbor's religion. You will not be able, unless you and he are rarely alike. Above all, do not strain yourself to imitate it. Say in your heart, "I am resolved to have only such religion as is real to me, because that alone is mine."

RELIGION like love must be a free and spontaneous birth within the soul, a discovery which each man makes for himself. The most beautiful and inspiring thought in the world may be positively repulsive when it is thrust upon us as a dogma or exacted of us as a creed, just as the great masterpieces of literature become irksome to children when cut up into task-work for them.

RELIGION is the result of the pressure of the divine will upon the human. It is the compulsion of God making itself felt in a man's life.

RELIGION is a man's adjustment to the ultimate realities. You cannot mix and combine the different religions and make an ideal religion, any more than you can mix different men and make an ideal man. Your composite religion will simply be nobody's religion until you have a composite man to match it.

A MAN'S religion must not be a lowly camp-fire kindled in some safe and sheltered depression in his nature. It must be a lofty beacon-light flaming from the high place. A man's religion must be the commanding thing in his life. Indeed, whatever is the commanding thing in his life is his religion, whether it be called by that name or not.

THAT which comes to us as a suppliant, asking to be patronized, begging a little corner of our life, a little fraction of our income, cannot be religion. When religion comes to us, it will come as a king. It will claim our all. It will speak with absolute authority.

IT cannot be said too often that the greatest truths and the grandest realities need no defense and protection. Jesus Christ does not need your defense of His divinity. The Bible does not need your argument for its inspiration.

IT takes ages to produce a Bible; and it is a part of the value of our Bible that the ages have been at work upon it. The very fact that in its hoar antiquity the sense of individual authorship has been largely lost adds dignity and authority. Its background is not individual but racial. It comes to us as the work, not of men, but of Man.

THE truth is growing upon us that the universe is too big and too vital to be reduced to any formula that our minds are capable of evolving. When a man sends us a Bible-chart of the world, explaining all the dispensations, we promptly put it in the waste-basket. Its very completeness condemns it. We beg of the creedmakers that they leave something to the imagination. And when in our own thinking something appears that purports to be a complete formula of everything, if we are wise we shall simply receive it and place it on file.

THERE are some truths which are all the more inspiring to us, because we have to stand on tip-toe to catch even a glimpse of them. We know that, in the very nature of the case, if they are what we hope, they must be beyond anything which in our present stage of development we could by any possibility comprehend. If we could fully understand God, He would not be God. If we could open a window at any moment and look into heaven, it would not be the heaven of which we dream.

THE trouble with our creeds is that they have undertaken the impossible, to state the great realities of religion in scientific formulae. The creeds that are to live must be written in poetry, in that symbolic language which is not intended to be subjected to exact definition or analysis. In that spirit we repeat the Apostles' Creed, we sing the Doxology, we chant the Psalms, we partake of the Communion, we join in the great historic rituals. And soon we begin to love them all, to love every altar and shrine which the human spirit has builded, whether it be made of stones or whether it be made of words. We love them all, because in and through them all breathes the one great prayer, "Nearer, my God, to Thee".

SOME lives are like the steamship, propelled by the energy stored up in the coal beds. These are they that derive their strength from their faith in the past, the old doctrines, the old institutions, the ancient events. "No doubt (say they) the sun is shining today; but we have not yet found how to make ships go by current sunshine; we have to resort to the dusky lumps in which is the concentrated sunshine of the past. It takes the old doctrines to build churches and put strength into human lives." And there is a deal of truth in that. Those old creeds once came over men with a flash of power from on high. And there is power in them yet for many men who would be wholly at a loss for strength if left to any inspirations they could find in the present.

THE Parable of the Talents is the charter of religious progress. The painstaking traditionalist, stickling for the faith once delivered and striving to hand it down unchanged in creeds and confessions, is apt to believe himself the faithful servant well pleasing to the Lord. In reality, his is the part of the man who wrapped the talent in a napkin.

THE glory of Christianity has been that in prevailing over the religions of other races it has been able also to absorb into itself the contributions these races were making to the higher life of the world. It is a part of the greatness of our religion that it does not count itself a finality, but is always a living, growing thing. As such it must go to foreign nations, not to destroy or combat their sacred ideals, but to fulfil and perfect them, and itself also to be fulfilled and perfected by them.

THE Church is to be renewed not by reducing her beliefs to the minimum, but by refilling her empty creeds with helpful and inspiring truths.

THERE is no crisis in the life of the Church today which is not first a crisis in the lives of the individuals who compose it.

THERE are things more desirable than Christian unity. The Church, which is Christ's body, can well afford to be rent asunder in every generation,

if only it be broken in the service of truth and right, in the unending battle with falsehood and wrong.

WHEN a child is losing its milk teeth, there is no occasion for worrying lest he may lose too much. Nature takes care of that. And that is the kind of confidence we need in reference to the changes that are going on in religion today.

SOME religious beliefs are today in the position of the stage-coach,—obsolete except in the back-country. Others are like the air-ship,—clearly in sight but not yet fully mastered.

BEFORE we can have an evangelism that will reach intelligent men, we must have an evangel composed of ideas which men of intelligence accept. We have long had an effective evangel for people who in mind are children; but the evangel that shall reach and move people who in mind are full-grown men, is even now in the making.

TODAY as we study the old revivals we see that the men who sat silent and unresponsive when all the rest were swayed by the appeals of the preacher, instead of being the most hardened sinners, were sometimes among the strongest and most characterful. They were men whose wills were not to be stampeded, and who dared to affirm by their cour-

ageous silence that their souls were their own. I can see some rude evangelist of the synagogue trying to force the lips of the young Jesus during those eighteen silent years, and going away baffled, concluding there was nothing there. The soul knoweth the times of its silence and the time of its speech.

THE old theologians measured the peril of the soul in terms of suffering, and so they exhausted the imagination in picturing a hell that should be commensurate with human wickedness. But pain after all is only of the surface. The great griefs lie too deep for tears; the great penalties lie too deep for pain. The real tragedies of life are not in terms of suffering but of death.

THE questions that mark the firing line of progress are always divisive questions. It is only upon such questions that it costs anything for a man to declare himself, and it is only in regard to them that his attitude has significance. Too many Christian soldiers are following along the trail of some great campaign, spending their strength in clubbing things that are already dead or dying, and raising standards of victory in the form of unanimous resolutions about things which ten years before it would have taken some courage to discuss.

THE world is athrill with a great expectation. Sweeping amendments are pending not only to by-laws but to constitutions. Some things that have

always been called right are going to be called wrong, and some things that have always been called wrong are not unlikely to be called right. Widespread is the feeling that things are not arranged rightly in this world, and that vastly more lives than is necessary are being thwarted by the conditions in which they are lived. We are entering upon an age of experiments; and experiments mean many failures, always in the presence of a chorus of elders quoting the wisdom of the past. But all these experiments, some of them grotesque in the extreme, are but signs of that mighty movement toward a fuller and better life which is beating at the heart of the world today.

JESUS

THE four gospels are the precious relics of the life of a most extraordinary Person. They are mutilated and fragmentary, confused and mingled with the notions of the disciples and of the early church. But they are all we have. He who is looking for rules to lay down as authority for himself or another will not find much to satisfy him there. Nor will the legal mind, demanding original documents and verbal exactness. But he who is looking for spiritual suggestions, for bread of life, for some accent of the Holy Ghost, will not fail to find it in these memorials of Jesus.

IN examining the walls of an English cathedral, the student of architecture will point out to you here and there some rude arch or lintel as the work of the earliest builders, the Normans it may be or the Saxons. So in the mass of material that has come down to us in the gospels, the practised eye of the scholar will discern here and there a sentence or a parable that is an unmistakable part of the most ancient tradition and that cannot possibly have been added by the will of man. And as we reverently take these ancient fragments and piece them together, we can reconstruct, not indeed the biography of the Master—no one will ever be able to write that with any fulness,—but a kind of portrait of him which the more we dwell upon it inspires our rever-

ence and affection. It is very simple and unassuming, very human in all the lovable traits of humanity, with a deep abhorrence of all that is not genuine and true, with a deep sense of the beauty and worth and high destiny of human life, with a deep sense of the infinite love of God for all His children and of the indignation of God at those who wrong and oppress their fellows,—above all with a deep sense of a great and beautiful will of God which was to be wrought out in this world and to which he himself was utterly and completely devoted.

NO, he did not travel; no, he did not bend over parchments; no, the sages of the world did not come to give him instruction. And yet into the soul of that Galilean peasant entered qualities distilled from the wisdom of all the climes. O Mary, what mysteries were hid within thy womb! What shadowy forms of wise men from the past of Israel and of all the world opened there their treasures and presented their gifts!

JESUS spoke with authority; but it was not so much the authority of one appointed to a position of command. It was rather the authority of one who possesses first-hand knowledge of the realities with which he is dealing. It was the authority of the truth.

THE great Teacher, with that marvelous lens of the pure heart which God had given him, saw clearly those great and simple truths which we at

best feel but dimly,—the divine love and the divine way of life. And as we take our stand by his side and look where he is looking, our own hearts do burn within us, our own vision becomes clarified, and at times the mists do seem to roll away.

JESUS was no blind and literal fulfiller of prophecy. His genius was in selecting which of the prophetic utterances he would fulfil. Some of them he ignored, others he postponed, while a few which rang true to his own heart he made the maxims of his ministry.

IF we cannot always recognize a great idea or a great cause, some of us can at least tell a great man when we see him. And if we are wise we shall do just what Peter and Andrew did, cast in our lot with him, because we know that along the path where he is going there will be things to be seen and things to be done.

THE doctrine of the divinity of Christ is simply the doctrine of God's infinite love made definite and concrete. The central article in the creed of Christendom is, "We worship the spirit of Jesus enthroned above the universe. We believe that the glory of the infinite God is the same glory that the world has seen in the face of Jesus Christ."

JESUS is the greatest soul in history because he is the most inclusive. It is not so much by his purity and zeal that he stands to us as the flower of humanity, but by reason of his largeness of spirit, his greatness of fellowship. Broad-based upon this democracy of fellowship rises the pyramid of an individuality so perfect that with one consent we pronounce it divine.

WHEN the artist would paint John the Baptist, he depicts a man addressing a crowd. When he would paint Jesus, he shows us a man talking with a single person, and a great multitude crowding about to hear.

JESUS was no opportunist shrewdly forecasting the movements of the popular mind. He gave little heed to the spirit of the age, which is only another name for the current fashion of thought. Alone in the mountains he studied the spirit of God, and he came down in the morning with shining face to speak and live in accord with the eternal truth of things.

THE voice of Jesus does not say, Wait for the time to be ripe, for the world to be ready. The world is never ready. The voice of Jesus says, Stand out forthwith and speak your word, strike your blow, and pay the cost without murmuring, even as I bore my cross.

THREE things the Master saw large,—the heavenly Father and the soul's communion with him,—men, women and children, their wrongs and virtues, sincerity, humility, justice, charity. By our needs and upward striving,—and a certain group of virtues, sincerity, humility, justice, charity. By our estimate of these things we can test our fellowship with Jesus.

TO follow Jesus is to obey the divine spirit in our souls as he obeyed that spirit in his soul. In such following of Jesus there is room for all the diversity of genius and temperament and occupation which life itself affords.

THE Master does the very thing by us which he asks us to do by the universe,—namely, to interpret it by the good that is in it and not by the evil, to believe that the good and not the evil is the key to its meaning. That is the path which leads to faith. Looking out upon the world, the Christian says: "I see a mixture; I see evil; nevertheless I am resolved to have faith in good, to have faith in God." Looking into the heart of man, Christ says: "I see a mixture; I see much evil; nevertheless I am resolved to believe in the good." So he blesses us and does not curse. He names us by the good in us and not the evil. And by that faith he becomes our Saviour.

IT is the glory of the Syrophenician woman that she refused to believe even the words of Jesus when they seemed to set a limit to the love and goodness of God. And Jesus smiled upon her and said she was right.

JUDAS present at the Lord's supper? Yes, the Master would not exclude even him. He never said of any man, "I will refuse to break bread with him because he is my enemy."

WE say that the enemies of Jesus put him to death. But the enemies of Jesus would never have dared to put him to death, if the men he had helped and delivered had stood by him. Think what those lepers might have been to Jesus, if they had all come back and stood by him. He had troubles of his own when he healed those men. He was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified. It did not occur to them to ask if there might be something that ten men could do for him, ten men that had been lepers.

JOSEPH of Arimathea is the type of the belated disciple in every age. The leaders in the clique that planned the overthrow of the Nazarene knew there would be no serious opposition from Joseph. There never is. The man who has been studying to keep on the safe side, evading the issue, happening to be absent when decisive votes are taken, is not the man to do much fighting when the issue is finally

joined. The logic of events is then too strong for him. Perhaps he turned on his pillow that Good Friday morning and said to himself: "What use in my going down to that meeting? It is all cut and dried. Of what avail to vote in a minority of one?" But who can say what a difference it would have made if in Pilate's judgment hall a voice had spoken out, saying, "Governor, I wish it understood that the vote was not unanimous, and that Joseph of Arimathea enters his protest!" But no such voice was heard.

AS the life of the world becomes more highly organized, the kind of life that Jesus taught is becoming more and more the indispensable condition of social existence. The very sense of safety in which we go about the streets is due to our confidence that the spirit of good-will prevails in the hearts of people. And the points at which we feel the need of being on our guard against our fellows are precisely the places in life where the spirit of Christ has not yet gained control.

THERE are places in the Alps where one finds traces of the old roads that were built for the Roman legions. Straight across the fields and up the ravines and over the mountain-passes goes the ancient roadway paved with its little round cobbles. Our modern roads wind this way and that, finding easier and more comfortable grades. Now and then they cross or for a little way follow the old Roman

road. In that moment our feet are planted in the ancient way, and there is a thrill at the thought that we are on the very stones that resounded with the tramp of the imperial legions. So our winding pathways in life, conforming too much to the easier grades of this world, cross sometimes or follow for a little the path of the Christ. For a moment our feet are standing where his stood; for a day we walk in his path. Then we are pulled aside by the calculating prudences of this world. The thrill, the sense that we are in the path, is gone. We do not know where we are now. We are lost again, save as now and then in the distance we catch glimpses of the shining way of the Christ.

THE NATIVITY

CHRISTMAS is supremely the festival of the boy in every man, the girl in every woman. Alas for the man who is grown up! He is of all men most unfortunate. There is something wrong about him, something hopelessly lacking in him. He may have many excellent qualities, but somewhere he went wrong. He took the wrong track, and it led him into a cul-de-sac; and there he is, stalled, hopelessly and irretrievably adult. And the root of all the trouble is that he has lost out of his life that most precious thing, the spirit of a child.

WE do not need to search for witnesses of this morning's sunrise who can tell us the form of its clouds and the names of its changing hues. The sun is here in all its glory and in the light of it we have the vision of the world. And even so, we do not need to know just what songs they were that the angels sang, or just what were the secrets of Mary's breast; for the Sun of Righteousness is risen with healing in his wings, and the holy Church throughout the world is singing her Christmas hymn.

THAT which the Scriptures tell us of the birth of Jesus is true also of every child that is born into the world as the fruit of the union of love. Do not angel presences bend over the expectant mother?

JOSEPH is a neglected hero of the Nativity, patient, faithful Joseph,—refusing the counsel of this world which would bid him “put her away privily”, and that other counsel of this world which would bid him “make her a public example”,—brave, loyal Joseph, taking his Mary to Bethlehem and sheltering that which was born of her with his own good name. There is a sermon to be preached from this story of Joseph and Mary, a sermon that will demand holier standards of honor in the acknowledgment of parenthood and the welcoming of little children into the world.

WE have known more about the planets than we have about the children. We have at least been willing to let the planets alone and study the laws of their motions respectfully. Instead of blaming the sun for having eclipses, we immortalize the astronomer who discovered their laws. Instead of finding fault because the orbits of the planets are eccentric, we honor the Kepler who computed the laws of their elliptical motion. But because children were little, we have laid hands on them when they had eclipses, and punished them when their orbits were eccentric. Today we are repenting in dust and ashes, and are studying the children that we may know of them, as of the lilies, how they grow.

DEATH AND DESTINY

AMONG the animals and the less developed types of humanity death is accepted stolidly as a matter of course. The depth of the tragedy is not felt, because the awakening of the soul has not yet come. But in proportion as men become more keenly conscious of their individuality and of the meaning and value of personality in others, the shadow cast by the fact of death becomes darker and darker, until we have no language with which we can speak of it.

THE awful thing about the idea that death may involve the dissolution of the spirit, is not that it denies us the privilege of existing a little longer. One might go to sleep content, perhaps, so far as that is concerned. The awful thing is that it would be God saying No to that sense of eternal value with which we instinctively invest the soul and all the loves and devotions that are wrapped up with it.

NOW when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat to a desert place apart." Alone in that boat on the lake Jesus laid the cold fact of John's murder up against his soul. He measured the fact of death, even in this most outrageous form, up against himself and found himself larger than it. There was more of him than there was of it. He was able to surround it, comprehend it, take it

up into himself and go forward. . . . Then, when this had come to pass,—I think it was night now and the stars were out,—he sat up in the boat and took the oars and rowed to the nearest shore, and lay down beneath a tree and slept. And in the morning his disciples found him. And the people came seeking him. And all day long he taught them many things, and stretched out his hand to heal their sick, and broke the bread for their hunger, telling them of the bread of life of which if a man eat he shall be victor over death.

MY faith in the future life is built not so much upon any miracle of the past, as upon the living miracle of the spiritual nature of man, unfulfilled, unsatisfied, reaching out for knowledge, for power, for love, for expression, and finding in this world no place where it may lay its head.

ALL honor to the men who have resolved to live nobly even though they have little faith in the prospects of the soul beyond this life. But such stoicism cannot be the permanent attitude of the thinking world. At its best it is like the momentum of the cable-train, which serves to carry it over the space from where one cable ends to where the grip-man can lay hold of the next cable. The task set for the present generation is to get its grip on a new cable of faith in the future life.

NO man can get very far in the work of high and serious character-building within his own soul, without discovering in himself a certain peculiar evidence for the future life. He feels like a half-built cathedral full of unfinished arches and with the plan of the whole dimly disclosing itself. He can form no intelligible theory of the universe which shall not provide for the completion of that structure.

WHATEVER makes the human soul greater and more valuable, whatever lifts it up into the light as a rich and splendid thing, makes mightily for the belief in immortality. No cheap and common product is to be endued with immortality. It is not the factory product that men preserve, but the work of art, the hand-tooled binding, the original manuscript. These are the things men prize, because they cannot be reproduced and nothing can take the place of them. And if our lives are to be endued with immortality, it will be for a similar reason. It will be because there is something in each of them so rare, so precious, so peculiar in its promise in the eyes of the Most High, that the substance which composes it can never again be cast into the melting-pot.

THE problem of resurrection is one that confronts a man long before his body is put in the grave. To go down the slope of time with face glowing, with faith in the great ideals undimmed, with mind and heart open, ever saying with the Apostle, "I count not myself to have apprehended but I press on",—that is resurrection.

IF I stake my Christian faith upon one thing more than another, it is upon the power of the human soul to grow and advance in spiritual stature on through this life and out into the unseen. I do not wonder that a man falters in his faith when he finds himself halted, palsied, ossified in his life. How can there be anything but stagnation of faith when there is stagnation of life? If the 'shades of the prison-house' do of necessity close about us, so that in a few years we are to be stalled and can go no farther, then I for one give up my faith. But the Christian is a man who has undertaken in his own life to give the lie to that assertion, and to prove the power of the human spirit to advance up to the very point where it passes out of sight.

AMONG the deepest longings of the human soul is the longing for union with its own. Earth does not afford that perfect union. In vain we clasp hands and look into each other's eyes; the longing is baffled and unfulfilled. What is this but a prophecy of unspeakable things that are yet to be?

TOGETHER'' is the great word of heaven; and there shall be place side by side, without jealousy or confusion, for all its different meanings,—for its tender intimacies that may not be invaded, for its little circles of trust, and its larger circles of co-operation. There shall be room for free debate and generous rivalry, each putting forth the thing that is in his soul, and not only rejoicing that others

shall do likewise, but confident that all will work together for the uncovering of that underlying harmony which we call the Truth.

CONSTELLATIONS of kindred personalities, supplementing each other, completing each other, fulfilling each other in some closer union than earth can know—that is a part of my dream of heaven. The family on earth is a faint prototype of that heavenly family, founded on spiritual relationships, which will be the most beautiful thing in all the city of God.

SHALL we be satisfied when we awake? We shall be satisfied;—but not in ways that we can now foresee, perhaps not in ways that would satisfy us now. We shall be changed first,—and then we shall be satisfied. We shall be adjusted to those eternal realities which the great words God and Immortality dimly foreshadow.

WE are going to live forever. This life is but a passing phase. Its successes, its failures, will soon be forgotten. It will all be the same in a thousand years—all but one thing, the Soul, its integrity; that is the only thing that matters, the only thing that endures.

WHEN the soul has passed through the experience of death, it will not say, "This is the end; here I am for all eternity." It will say rather: "This is the new beginning, the starting-point from which I go forward on the next stage of the great Journey."

OSAY not, It is one year less! It is one year more added to the possessions of the soul. We do not bid farewell to anything tonight. We take it all with us, every experience through which we have passed. It has entered into us. It lives on forever in the soul. And are we not richer, stronger, deeper, larger, because the stream of life, with all its bitter and all its sweet, has flowed through us for another twelvemonth?

THE soul is like a ship moving from port to port, taking on at each the things that wait for her there. It is only the sentimental passenger who sheds tears at the thought that we shall never see that scene again. The captain knows that we have been there for a purpose and that safely stored away in the hold is the cargo that port had for us. And so the ship grows more and more richly and heavily laden as she sails on through the years. Is she a better ship? Perhaps not. She may be the worse for wear. Still I think she rides steadier than when gaily she set forth. But, however that may be, there is more in her than there was then. And that is what the voyage is for, the lading of the ship.

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